

Executive Summary of August 4, 2014 Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice Region 4, Meeting to Focus on North Birmingham, Alabama

The Environmental Protection Agency's Region 4 Administrator, Ms. Heather McTeer Toney, convened the Regional **Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG)**, to bring federal support and technical assistance to the myriad of needs facing the City of Birmingham and the citizens in the area that makeup the North Birmingham Environmental Collaborative. The EJ IWG was held on **August 4, 2014, at the Vulcan Park and Museum, Birmingham, Alabama with a focus** to work with other federal agencies to assist with revitalization efforts towards making a visible difference in the communities impacted by potential environmental concerns, blight and degradation. The meeting included representatives from the communities, Congresswoman Sewell, Mayor William A. Bell, Sr. and Councilor William Parker, along with other City of Birmingham officials, ADEM, ALDOT and Federal Agency heads and their staff. Federal agencies in attendance included HUD, COE, DOT, DOL, DOJ, HRSA, HHS, ATSDR and EDA.

The Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG) was established in 1994 under Executive Order 12898. The role of the EJ IWG is to guide, support and enhance federal environmental justice and community-based activities. The EJ IWG is comprised of 17 federal agencies and White House offices. Information on the EJ IWGF and the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/interagency/>

The EPA is engaged in a coordinated approach to evaluate the environmental condition and potential environmental impacts, in certain areas of the North Birmingham, Fairmont, Collegeville, and Harriman Park neighborhoods, as well as portions of Five-Mile Creek and Harriman Park ditch, located in and around Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama. This effort, which includes air, water and waste issues, is known as the North Birmingham Environmental Collaboration Project. The EPA is also engaged in working with local stakeholders to develop a plan to revitalize this area and improve the quality of life for its residents.

The meeting began with a tour of the area, and the agenda provided an opportunity for the Community Representatives and the City to discuss the current conditions and their needs and for each of the Federal agencies in attendance to share information on resources and technical assistance available to address the needs of North Birmingham. Breakout sessions were held for the seven priority areas identified by the Community Leaders and City of Birmingham. Each Breakout group was comprised of community members and the appropriate City, State or federal subject matter experts for the specified topic. The topics were chosen to foster a collaboration across federal, state, and local government entities and the community to improve community sustainability, quality of life, and economic opportunities in North Birmingham.

The discussion topics were:

1. Housing and Community Development
2. Economic Development
3. Community Development: Parks, Recreation, and Trails

4. Health and Wellness
5. Transportation Needs
6. Employment and Education Needs
7. Infrastructure, Flood Control, and Watershed Management

Although the meeting was successful it is clear that it is the first step of many to come. The EJ IWG will meet in January 2015 to solidify a collaborative effort around north Birmingham. Next Steps include:

- Reconvening the seven subgroups to fully develop expectations, action items and next steps that include milestones.
- Holding a federal agencies only meeting to discuss resources and goals.
- Defining clear priorities and developing tools and technical assistance and capacity building opportunities.

THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA



A Citizens' First City MAYOR WILLIAM A. BELL, SR. AUGUST 4, 2014
WILLIAM PARKER, COUNCILOR, DISTRICT 4

Background on "The Magic City"

The City of Birmingham was founded in 1871 and quickly became the industrial capital of the South. Explosive growth during the late 1800s and early 1900s earned Birmingham the nickname of "Magic City," and the growth is primarily attributed to being the only place in the world where large deposits of the three raw materials needed to make iron existed close together: coal (for conversion into coke), iron ore, and limestone. North Birmingham was developed as an industrial area with housing for workers built adjacent to factories and mills. While the manufacturing industry does not command the world presence it did in the past, North Birmingham still has immense environmental issues, especially in areas that are still heavily industrial.

EPA is evaluating the environmental conditions of the area related to current and historical industrial activities that have affected the environment in several North Birmingham communities. Some industrial facilities are regulated under the EPA's Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and/or the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act environmental laws. Activities at these facilities, which are subject to these laws, are overseen by either the EPA or a State or local agency through delegation agreements.

EPA is using its Superfund authorities to assess nearby communities for the possible presence of pollutants. The Superfund Program is focused on identifying and addressing contamination within the Superfund Site area referred to as the 35th Avenue Superfund Site. EPA began its assessment by seeking access to residential properties in October 2012 and sampling approximately 1100 properties. EPA started a cleanup in February 2014 to remove contaminated soil found at 52 properties. EPA is also working under other authorities to assess air quality in the area, address hazardous waste compliance at a facility located in the communities, address transportation and access issues, and assess opportunities for a comprehensive watershed plan.

The neighborhoods of Harriman Park, Fairmont, Collegeville and North Birmingham are the primary affected areas. Collegeville was one of the few neighborhoods African Americans were allowed to live in under Birmingham's segregation laws. The neighborhood is also home to historic Bethel Baptist Church, an important organizing site during the Civil Rights Movement. The neighborhood was and remains train-trapped, cut off from the rest of Birmingham with one street that serves as a thoroughfare and the rest of the neighborhood enclosed by industrial tracts and railroad tracks.



Birmingham, Alabama

Department of Transportation

Assessment of public transit needs and a parallel request for new buses with the goal of increasing ridership, expanding routes throughout North Birmingham, an underserved public transit community

⇒ Create 4-5 transit hubs within Birmingham that would improve efficiency, reduce travel time, and save limited system funds; North Birmingham business district would be one of the transit hubs

⇒ 47th Avenue Improvements (Fairmont)

◊ Arterial extension of I-22; neighborhood truck bypass

⇒ Expand the emerging bicycle network into North Birmingham; proposed projects:

- ◊ Village Creek Greenway
- ◊ 33rd Ave. N. Trail (North Birmingham)
- ◊ Carver High School Trail (North Birmingham)
- ◊ 29th Ave. Trail (North Birmingham and Collegeville)
- ◊ 35th Ave. Trail (North Birmingham and Collegeville)
- ◊ US Hwy. 31 side path (North Birmingham and Fairmont)
- ◊ Shuttlesworth Drive Trail (Collegeville & Harriman Park)

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Identify Housing Authority Birmingham District properties within North Birmingham and prioritize list for rehab and new construction for mixed-use development; HUD Choice Neighborhood Grant

Evaluate zoning around major pollutant sources in an effort to create buffer zones that separate heavy industrial sites from the lower impact residential uses; specific areas will be identified upon completion of the North Birmingham Framework plan in Q4 of 2014

National Endowment for the Arts

Creative Placemaking via Our Town Grant for Environmental Trail

Signage in North Birmingham that educates the public about environmental justice and the resolution of pollution

Retain a historic preservation consultant to complete a historical/architectural survey and National Register nomination for a potential Collegeville Historic District

FEMA

1. Assistance utilizing deeded properties for flood control and drainage solutions (USCOE)
2. Approval from FEMA to use deed-restricted properties as a part of an overall redevelopment project
3. Assistance in identifying a range of allowable re-use options

Department of Health

And Human Services

- ▼ Comprehensive Healthcare Facility and Treatment Center in the former Jefferson County Health Department Clinic located in North Birmingham (HRSA)
- ▼ Urban mobile health clinics: buses are transformed into mobile health clinics that go to neighborhoods where assessments and medical care can take place (CDC/USDOT)
- ▼ Medical advice and education from qualified personnel to build healthcare trust within the community (HRSA)

Northern Birmingham Community Coalition Priorities

August 2014

The North Birmingham Community Coalition (NBCC) adopted three goals and have explored potential strategies to be implemented to achieve their goals. In September 2014 a draft action plan will be completed and delivered to the NBCC. They will then begin to work towards implementation of the strategies laid out in the action plan. The three priorities are:

Housing: Improve access to healthy, affordable housing.

- = REHAB: Promote housing preservation and rehabilitation.
- = REBUILD: Increase affordable, workforce housing.
- = RECLAIM: Reclaim abandoned properties for residential use.

Commercial Revitalization: Improve access to neighborhood-oriented amenities and

Increase job opportunities for North Birmingham residents:

- = FOOD: Increase access to grocery stores and health, affordable food.
- = FUEL: Increase access to green fuel service stations.
- = RETAIL: Increase access to neighborhood-oriented retail.

Health: Improve health outcomes through:

- = HEALTH CARE: Increase access to health care services.
- = COMPREHENSIVE WELLNESS: Increase access to social services and resources and Services that support health living.

The North Birmingham Community Coalition is in the process of establishing workgroups around the priorities as well as a workgroup to support further organizational development.

North Birmingham Community Coalition

Vision, Mission and Principles

Final Draft – July 28, 2014

Vision (aspirational vision of the community)

It is our vision that Northern Birmingham neighborhoods (Collegeville, Fairmont, Harriman Park and North Birmingham) will be vibrant, healthy communities celebrated for their role as cultural and economic touchstones for the City of Birmingham's Civil Rights movement and industrial heritage. Together the neighborhoods prosper by supporting jobs, affordable housing and retail options and foster community wellbeing with access to comprehensive wellness amenities, health services, and a safe and clean environment.

Mission (what issues/topics the NBCC will work on)

To improve the quality of life for the neighborhoods of Northern Birmingham (Collegeville, Fairmont, Harriman Park and North Birmingham) by encouraging a sense of cultural pride and investment in the communities and increasing access to comprehensive wellness amenities and health care services, neighborhood-oriented retail, job opportunities, healthy, safe and affordable housing and a clean environment.

Principles (how the work is done)

As we strive to fulfill our mission, the NBCC is committed to:

- Increasing cooperation, communication and collaboration between the Collegeville, Fairmont, Harriman Park and North Birmingham neighborhoods to help ensure investments benefit all the neighborhoods of Northern Birmingham.
- Supporting equitable investments that respect and lift up our existing communities.
- Fostering a culture where residents, business and industry collaborate, innovate and receive mutual benefit from community revitalization efforts.
- Developing intergenerational community leadership.
- Using a consensus-based decision-making process to govern the Coalition's actions and ensure that the Coalition speaks with a unified voice.

JOIN THE NORTHERN BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY COALITION!

Planning for the Future

EPA Region 4 is sponsoring the formation of a Community Coalition to plan for the future of the communities of north Birmingham (including the North Birmingham, Fairmont, Collegeville and Harriman Park neighborhoods). The Coalition will include neighborhood representatives as well as business, faith, and community leaders and government agencies.

The communities of north Birmingham face many economic, environmental and social challenges. The Coalition will seek to bring together residents, community representatives and government agencies to address issues of environmental cleanup, enforcement and community investment. We will work to forge a shared vision and action plan to create positive community change.

Bring your expertise and ideas, and join us as we create a shared vision for the future of northern Birmingham!

What will the process look like?

The following diagram shows the proposed community planning process:



Should I join the Coalition?

- **Who can get involved?** Everyone! In order to develop a shared vision, the process will rely on the contributions from key stakeholders and community members who are invested in the future of the communities of north Birmingham.
EPA is seeking community residents and business owners as well as representatives from community-based organizations to join the Coalition.
- **What kind of time commitment is required?** Coalition members will be asked to attend a minimum of 3-4 Coalition meetings, a full day training retreat, and public meeting over the next 12 months. Coalition members may also need to review documents between meetings. The Coalition may decide to host a few additional subcommittee meetings.
- **What happens to the Coalition following the development of the community plan?** Coalition members will decide whether to continue meeting in order to guide implementation of the plan.

Are there other ways to get involved?

Yes! Coalition members will present their recommendations to the public in fall 2013. Feedback received at the meeting will be included in the final recommendations and community plan.

How can I learn more?

Get in touch with EPA!

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Sign up for meeting notifications!

Share your preferred contact information with EPA by contacting the Outreach Office or by signing up for electronic updates at <http://www2.epa.gov/north-birmingham-project>.

March
2013



FORMING THE COALITION

What responsibilities will Coalition members have?

Coalition members will need to demonstrate commitment to the following responsibilities:

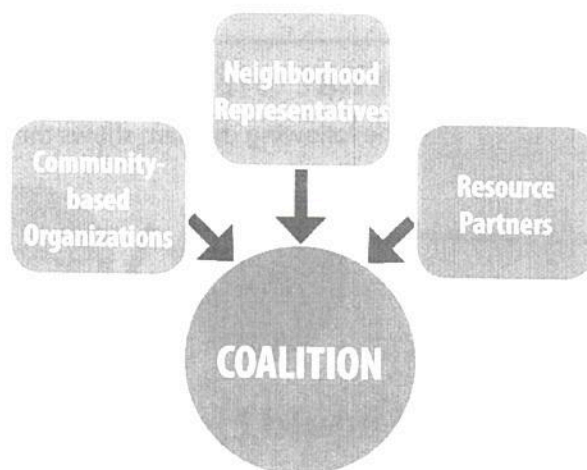
- Commitment to a consensus building process.
- Commitment to prepare for and attend Coalition meetings and events, which may include 3-4 Coalition meetings, a full day training retreat, and a public meeting over the next 12 months.
- Commitment to generating civic, political and financial support for implementation.
- Commitment to serve as community ambassadors for the project.

Who will be represented on the Coalition?

EPA will be seeking broad representation from the northern Birmingham community as well as from organizations and agencies that can serve as resources to the community representatives.

Representation will come from the following three groups:

- neighborhood representatives,
- community-based organizations, and
- partners who bring expertise or resources to the Coalition.



How will representatives be selected?

The Coalition will be composed of around 21 members. Representatives from each of the three groups will be selected as follows:

Group	Interests Represented	Selection Method	Total Representatives
Neighborhoods	Collegeville Fairmont Harriman Park North Birmingham	Neighborhood associations will each nominate 2 representatives.	8
Community-based organizations	Business community Education system Environmental advocacy and research Faith community Others?	Community-based organizations representing a spectrum of community interests will be invited to nominate a representative.	up to 13
Resource partners	Environment Health Planning Transportation Others?	Resource partners representing a spectrum of professional expertise will be invited to attend meetings in a resource capacity. These individuals may attend all meetings or may attend in a more targeted fashion, depending on the topic being discussed.	TBD, depending on resource needs. Resource partner representatives will not count towards the 21 member total.

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BIRMINGHAM REAL-TIME NEWS

The feds are coming: Delegation of federal agencies heading to Birmingham to discuss rebuilding, development efforts

Posted Jul 31, 2014

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By Joseph D. Bryant

parker and feds.jpg

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama -- A consortium of federal and state agencies will converge on Birmingham Monday to map out strategies to aid ongoing efforts to clear, restore and rebuild a long-neglected part of town.

About 10 federal agencies along with state and local officials Monday will participate in the day-long Federal Interagency Working Group gathering.

The meeting, organized by Councilman William Parker, will provide an opportunity to review current environmental work in the North Birmingham community and discuss ways other agencies could assist in the next phases of revitalization both environmentally and economically.

Birmingham neighborhood representatives will also participate in the meeting.

"This is all about how we revitalize the North Birmingham community and those neighborhoods," Parker told AL.com this afternoon.

Among agencies set to participate are the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Interior and the Economic Development Administration

"This is the model Spartanburg, South Carolina used with having federal, state, local and community groups collaborating," Parker said. "I will also detail them on our new initiative with the Clinton Global Initiative America."

Parker and Environmental Protection Agency officials point to Spartanburg as a successful example that Birmingham should follow.

With large industrial plants and remnants of abandoned plants, Spartanburg's south side neighborhood had similar environmental issues challenges as Collegeville, Harriman Park and Fairmont neighborhoods.

Spartanburg was able to partner with the EPA along with leveraging public and private investment to build a health clinic, recruit new businesses and reclaim formerly blighted and abandoned properties.

With EPA environmental cleanup already in his district, Parker said now is the time to prepare for the next phase – residential and economic redevelopment.

Parker called his participation last month in the Clinton Global Initiative America a major step in a long range plan to redevelop North Birmingham

Parker's long-term plan involves: continued soil remediation, development of vacant lots around historic Bethel Baptist Church for green space, construction of a pedestrian/vehicle bridge, redevelopment of Maclin Park, building affordable housing on the former Carver High School site and floodplain management.

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